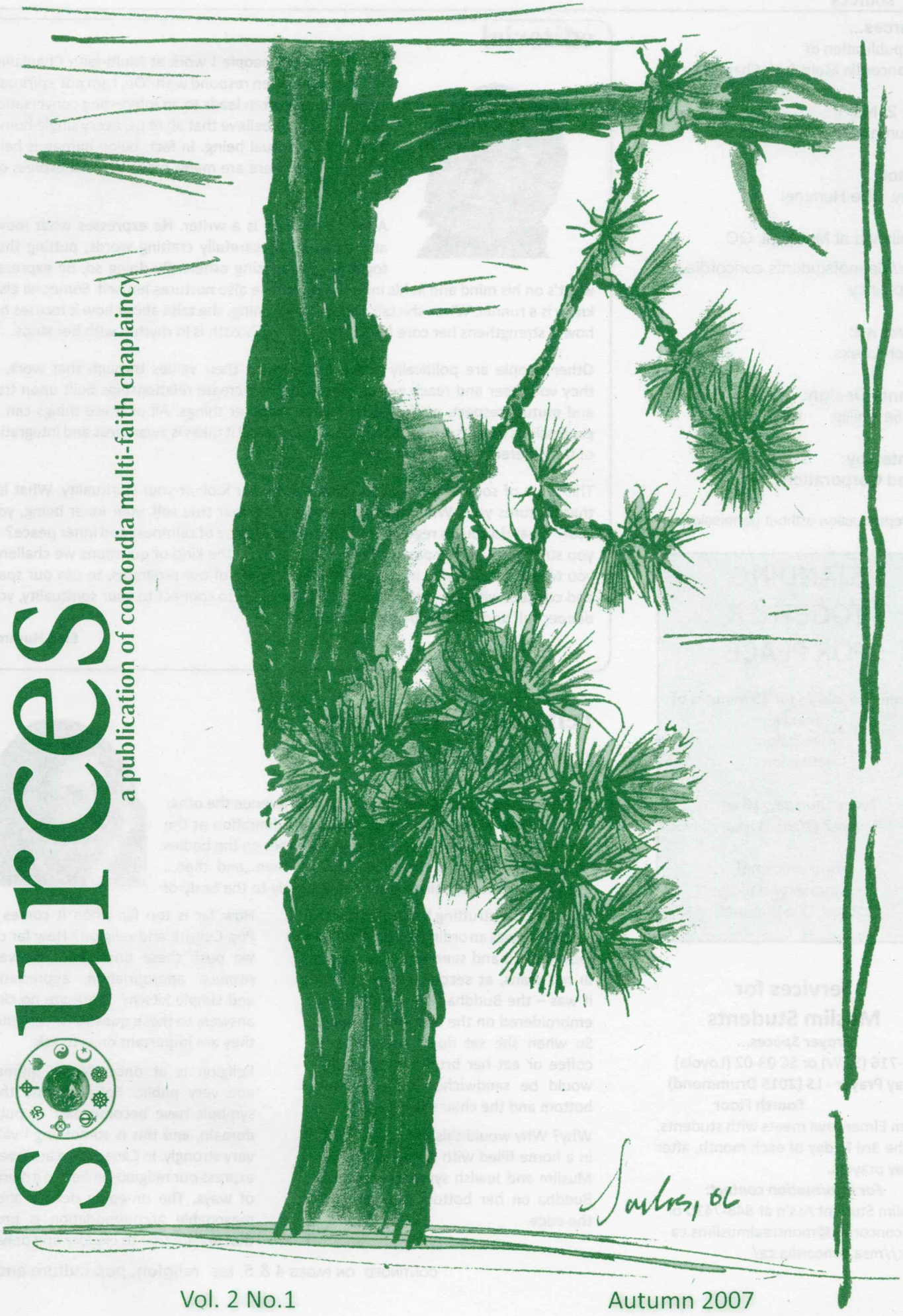
sources

a publication of concordia multi-faith chaplaincy



Vol. 2 No.1 Autumn 2007

sources...
a publication of
Concordia Multi-faith Chaplaincy

Vol. 2, No. 1
Autumn 2007

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Rev. Ellie Hummel

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STANDING TOGETHER FOR PEACE

Come and join us for 30 minutes of
silence
meditation
reflection

Every Thursday, 10 am
Annex Z (2090 Mackay)

All are welcome!
For more information,
contact Ellie Hummel

Services for Muslim Students

Prayer Spaces...

H-716 (SGW) or SC 03-02 (Loyola)

Friday Prayer - LS (2015 Drummond)
Fourth Floor

Imam Elmenyawi meets with students, on the 3rd Friday of each month, after Friday prayers.

For information contact:

Muslim Student Ass'n at 848-7410 or
msaconcordia@montrealmuslims.ca
http://msa.concordia.ca/

editorial

When I tell people I work at Multi-faith Chaplaincy, people often respond with "Oh, I am not spiritual!" This comment often leads to an interesting conversation. You see, I firmly believe that all of us, every single human being, is a spiritual being. In fact, being human is being spiritual. And there are many, many ways to express our spirituality.

A friend of mine is a writer. He expresses what moves and stirs him by carefully crafting words, putting them together, juxtaposing others. By doing so, he expresses what's on his mind and in his inner being and he also nurtures himself. Someone else I know is a runner. When she talks about her training, she talks about how it focuses her, how it strengthens her core being and how her breath is in rhythm with her steps.

Other people are politically active and express their values through that work, or they volunteer and reach out to others, or they create relationships built upon trust and mutual respect, or they do a myriad of other things. All of these things can be expressions of our spirituality and our inner life. All it takes is awareness and integration of the different parts of our being.

This issue of *sources* invites you to take a deeper look at your spirituality. What is it that nurtures you? When do you connect with your true self, your inner being, your soul? What do you do regularly that gives you a sense of calmness and inner peace? As you stroll through the pages of *sources*, these are the kind of questions we challenge you to ponder. We also invite you to attend some of our programs, to use our space and connect with our staff – all of which are ways to connect to your spirituality, your deeper self and the world around you!

Ellie Hummel

religion, pop culture and perception

I walked down the cobblestones of Duluth Avenue the other day, happy in the summer air, joyful in admiration at the Montreal fashions that parade along my street on the bodies of people from around the world. And then...and then... there they were...a pair of jeans fitted tightly to the body of a Montrealer strutting her stuff. At first glance she was an ordinary woman who looked good and seemed to be happy in her jeans, at second glance, there it was – the Buddha. The Buddha was embroidered on the seat of her jeans. So when she sat down to have her coffee or eat her brunch the Buddha would be sandwiched between her bottom and the chair she sat upon.

Why? Why would this upset me? I live in a home filled with Christian, Hindu, Muslim and Jewish symbols – yet this Buddha on her bottom put me over the edge.

How far is too far when it comes to Pop Culture and religion? How far can we push these boundaries between respect, appropriation, appreciation and simple kitsch? There are no clear answers to these questions, yet I think they are important ones to ask.

Religion is at once deeply intimate and very public. Religions and their symbols have become part of public domain, and this is something I value very strongly. In Canada, we are free to express our religious beliefs in a myriad of ways. The on-going debate about reasonable accommodation is proof that we are free to explore and debate

CONTINUED ON PAGES 4 & 5, SEE **religion, pop culture and...**

Roman Catholic Eucharist

in The Loyola Chapel:

Sunday 11:00 AM

Mon, Tue, Wed & Fri at 12:05 PM

Fr. Paul is at the Loyola office on Tuesday and Wednesday and SGW Annex Z on Thursday. For other times please call for an appointment.

we want your art! Your drawings, photos, doodles, artistic musings...we are always looking for new cover art and beautiful ways to fill our pages. Contact us for submission specs at sources@alcor.concordia.ca

Any questions call Bernie Glover.

sources
a publication of concordia multi-faith chaplaincy

your art here?

Weekly Insight Meditation Practice

Instruction, Silent Sitting, Teachings on Wisdom and Compassion, Guided Meditations

SGW: Wednesdays, two sessions:

Annex Z (2090 Mackay), room. 05
11:45 instructions,
12:00-1:00 practice and
5:00 PM instructions,
5:15-6:30 practice

Loyola: Tuesdays, 9:00-10:15
Loyola Chapel Meditation room

These sessions begin September 18th and 19th.
Contact Daryl Ross for information.

Remembering Mickie

Maybe it is true that we don't know what we have until we lose it. Maybe it is true that we don't truly appreciate the people around us until they are no longer with us. I have been wondering about this since one of our chaplains, Sister Michelina Bertone, died very unexpectedly on February 25, 2007. I thought I knew Mickie – as most of us affectionately called her.

She was born and raised in Italy, and she came to Canada as a young adult. She felt called to religious life and in her early twenties joined the Sisters of Sainte Anne, a Roman Catholic order of nuns. She had degrees from Loyola College and McGill University and a degree in counselling from University of Ottawa. Following many years as a high school teacher, she joined the Concordia Multi-faith Chaplaincy team in 1987. Mickie was fond of her family, her parents, her brother and her nephews, and the many friends she had. These are the things I knew about Mickie.

But what I didn't realize was how deeply and profoundly Mickie affected other people, how much she encouraged them and how much of a role model she was to them. As news of Mickie's death spread through the Concordia community, the stories of her influence also spread. Students in particular shared how they always felt welcomed by Mickie. When she greeted you, you felt like you were the most important, most precious person in the universe. She looked at you with loving eyes and a warm smile that simply said, "You are loved and accepted by God." It was as if you had given her a gift simply by talking to her, while you felt that you were receiving the gift of her presence and attentiveness. Mickie simply listened and was present and attentive to others, no matter what the hour, and what time of day, and even if she had work to attend to.

Mickie was also an excellent leader. A true leader, for whom leadership was not about herself but about the group she led. In the weeks after her death, many students talked about how they planned a retreat or workshop with Mickie. In the planning process, she encouraged them to find their own skills and to have confidence in themselves. Mickie helped others to believe in themselves and in their gifts and abilities.

Mickie had a deep passion for her Roman Catholic faith and delighted in sharing it with others. She often spoke about light – the light of God that we all have within us, no matter what we call that light or what we name the sacred. She was passionate about sharing the word, leading meditations on scripture and invited others to reflect on it and experience the message behind it. By doing so, she modeled her own faith and helped others live theirs.

Mickie could also truly celebrate. As people gathered after her death, they showed pictures that they had taken of her. Many of them showed Mickie with a birthday cake, or in celebration with her congregation, or at a wedding, anniversary or birth or simply a get-together among friends. She knew how to celebrate life and how to make special the ordinary. And maybe that is the greatest legacy that Mickie left with us. To celebrate! Be it special occasions, ourselves, our faith or others, Mickie taught us to value and appreciate all that we have.

In the weeks and months since her death, I have thought often about Mickie, about the things I knew and the things I have learned about her since her death. I also remembered an encounter I had with her many years ago.

One time, I asked Mickie how she was able to make and keep her vows as a sister and follow the path she had chosen for herself. I wondered whether it wasn't very difficult to live this out.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 5 SEE **remembering Mickie...**

living responsibly

This article was adapted from a talk given by Fr. Paul last fall, shortly after he joined the Multi-faith Chaplaincy team.

At the end of 2003, an estimated 1,039,000 to 1,185,000 persons in the United States, population approximately 300 million, were living with HIV/AIDS.[1] In 2003 in a small country like Togo (Africa) with a population of 5,681,519, the number people living with HIV/AIDS was estimated to be 110,000. The estimates for this country explicitly take into account the effects of excess mortality due to AIDS[2]. (That is more than five times the number of cases per capita than in the United States and roughly 1 person in 50 with HIV/AIDS.)

As someone who grew up in Togo, I have seen AIDS first hand. I have experienced it as a youth and as a priest working with young people. When I came to Canada, I was surprised that we talk little about AIDS and our faith. To say "I am not aware" or to blame someone else for the chaos in the world is unrealistic. To quantify AIDS in numbers per capita is also unrealistic and unfaithful to the truth. Everyone has been touched by the AIDS pandemic, has witnessed the suffering of a family member or a close friend, or has been affected by the articles and photographs seen daily in our newspapers and on television.

AIDS does not differentiate between the color of one's skin or the level of education or the religion of its victims. AIDS does not need immigration papers to cross borders and does not, as previously stated, have respect for anyone. So, respect yourself and preserve others. One would think that the active campaign of AIDS awareness would result in a decline in the numbers of those affected by the disease but stability in the number of victims seems to be the only reality. In Africa 55% of those known to be infected are women and in South Africa 10% of the total population is known to be infected.

December 1, International AIDS Day on our campus is an occasion to again reflect on this pandemic and to make a personal commitment to think before acting. With current antiviral drugs and vitamins which strengthen the immune system the early outward signs AIDS are masked for much longer. An HIV minefield can be lurking under the appearance of a healthy person. AIDS does not have a face. AIDS became the phantom who puts on mascara.

"The University is our 'alma mater' our 'giving mother' explicitly focused toward 'higher' learning in service to the development of persons in the fullest sense."[3] Our studies are meant to open our minds toward the well-being and to share globally all our findings against the pandemic.

As Jesus, the Son of Man, the One whom I follow in my faith, came to give life and life in it fullness[4], stood up for the sick, the lepers and the outcast of His time, so for me, He should be a role model to show my true colours, defending life and teaching the value of human dignity.

It is good to feel empathy with those who are sick, but it would be better to prevent getting the sickness. The many faces of AIDS demand that all people regardless of their faith and spiritual traditions reflect on the AIDS crisis from a spiritual perspective. We need to stop talking a rigid and traditional language of ignorance such as *AIDS is a punishment from God or an act of vengeance against different sexual orientations*. AIDS is a reality in our present world, which we need to integrate into all our studies and personally make rational and faithful choices so that AIDS becomes like the Plague, a distant memory from another century.

Fr. Paul Amegashie
Roman Catholic Chaplain

Footnotes:

[1] Center for Disease Control & Prevention Statistics
[2] World Factbook - Togo
[3] Heather Ann MacKenzie, *Seeking authentic educational development: A spiritual and philosophical journey*, Doctoral Thesis, Concordia University Montreal, Qc, March 2007, P. 163
[4] John 10: 10

religion, pop culture and...

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

our religious beliefs. However, this conversation has to begin from within ourselves. If we are not willing to be honest about what is comfortable and uncomfortable for us then this public debate is not valid. But, honesty is difficult.

For a long time I have been obsessed with iconography and came close to writing my undergraduate thesis about religion and its representation in pop culture. Overpriced clothing stores sell glow in the dark deities, the streets of New York are lined with vendors selling images of a holographic Jesus, and a new movement in LA was just founded around lingerie and meditation. So why should the Buddha on a pair of jeans upset me? Am I able to be honest with myself and my boundaries of what is comfortable for me?

It's about perception, upbringing and perhaps above all else it is about comfort. So much of our reaction to religion in the mainstream is about our comfort levels. I am uncomfortable with seeing the Buddha on somebody's behind, but I am comfortable having a Christian icon next to my Qu'ran in my Jewish house. This is an issue of comfort. However, I deeply believe that the moment we are too comfortable with religion is the moment we are allowing the most special elements of religion to die.

Religion is not about comfort. Mystical wisdom, prayer, interpretation, study, community – these are not comfortable things to be involved with – but this is religion. And this is what makes religion interesting and alive.

So, I wish the woman with the sacrilegious jeans well, because she made me uncomfortable which lets me know I am still alive in my relationship with what surrounds me. It is difficult to own up to the fact that I am perhaps not comfortable with all expressions of religion and it would be dishonest of me not to engage in these questions. It is questioning, reflecting and dialogue that make the experience of living in our privileged culture something to cherish and be a part of.

Arianne Shaffer
Inter-faith Educator

remembering mickie

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

"Ah", she replied. "Every morning I get up and I say 'Yes!' Yes to my vows, yes to my life and yes to God!" I have thought about her words often. They have encouraged me to say yes to my relationships, to the challenges that come my way. They have helped me accept my gifts and the gifts of others. And even her death is an opportunity to live out the "Yes" she talked about. We can say yes to life, whatever it brings, even untimely death, and yes to the path before us, and yes to the blessings we are and we share.

Ellie Hummel
Ecumenical Chaplain
and Coordinator

Seeking to renew your spiritual practice?

Individual Retreats or Spiritual Accompaniment are available upon request.

Contact Ellie Hummel,
Daryl Ross or
Paul Amegashie

our winter retreat

As a first time university student in the fall 2006 semester, discovering Multi-faith Chaplaincy was a truly unique and eye-opening experience for me. I was introduced to Chaplaincy by a member of Interfaith Connections Committee, a group aimed at promoting dialogue and exploration. Come the winter semester, I became a member of this committee. We became a tight-knit group by the end of the semester. We debated and explored through several Thursday meetings while we enjoyed delicious dinners, thanks to Mo' Hubbs. We wanted to take the still very young Interfaith Connections program to a deeper level.

The idea of organizing a retreat had been in the back of everyone's mind for some time. The process of organizing the retreat from the logistical side of things found itself to be much more bureaucratic and detail-specific than many of us thought, but as we all quickly found out, the hard work led to a fantastic and truly magical weekend.

One of the objectives of Multi-faith Chaplaincy is to nurture faith, spirituality and social responsibility. Personally, I believe that our retreat did just that. Best of all, the programs came from the students themselves. We debated on whether or not to invite religious leaders and/or chaplains to guide the various activities of the weekend, but decided to have the events led by students in order to allow people to view how they, as students, young adults, and spiritual explorers live their own respective religious/ spiritual lives.

The retreat took place at Camp Kinkora, nestled away in the Laurentians. The frozen lake, the trails through the forest, and the majestic mountain view all contributed to the special energy of the weekend.

The retreat started off with an introductory talking circle and smudging ceremony. It was followed by a Shabbat dinner where the twenty-eight participants got to know each other and engaged in many discussions concerning their own religious and spiritual experiences. The rest of the weekend we participated in a silent walk through the woods, Buddhist chanting, Muslim prayers, a prayer bead making workshop, a Sufi Dhikr, and a Havdalah service with each retreatant participating as he or she felt comfortable.

Each and every participant, including those on the organizing committee, took something unique from the weekend. For some the retreat was an educational experience, for others it was much more spiritual and exploratory. Whatever their intention for attending the retreat was (of which there were many) I can safely say that everyone walked away from our experience at least a bit more curious about the rich and beautiful religious and spiritual practices that surround us each and every day.

Mariel Edwards-Carreau
Religion and Art History

Looking for Roman Catholic Students!

We are looking for Roman Catholic Students who would be interested in helping to form a **Catholic Students Association** at Concordia.

If you are interested contact Fr. Paul Amegashie, Bernie Glover or call the Chaplaincy office.

(Faculty or staff who are interested in getting involved are always welcome.)

Fall Retreat at the Oka Monastery

October 26-28, 2007

An opportunity to rest, reflect, renew in the quiet of a Cistercian monastery

Cost: $75 for students;
$95 for all others.

For information or registration:
Paul Amegashie or
Bernie Glover

to live in the present moment

This article was adapted from a reflection presented at the 2007 Multi-faith Graduation Celebration.

Five blind people are put into a room with an elephant. In their quest to understand what an elephant looks like each person touches the elephant. One ends up with the tail in hand, the other a foot, one explores the trunk, the tusk and finally the body. Each comes to understand the elephant very differently, until they are able to overcome their different perspectives and understand the whole picture. In Jainism this is understood as the principle of Anekantavad, meaning not to consider a singular point of view as the only correct view but to consider all as possible truths or parts of the truth. This story for me epitomizes Multi-faith Chaplaincy. While exploring our own beliefs we are reminded of others' in a safe and respectful place where dialogue is encouraged and fear reduced.

Graduation form university is a time of transition. Often times transition equates to fear. The ever popular question of "So, what are you going to do with a degree in _____!?" can seem daunting; as if a degree comes with a booklet of answers. For those of you whose heart rate just went up – take a deep breath.

"The highest education is that which does not merely give us information but brings our life into harmony with all existence." Tagore

That harmony is not found fumbling over the past, thinking "if only"? Nor is harmony found in the future with "what if"? Harmony is found in the present. So as we celebrate this stage of our lives, let us invite every moment to be a celebration of life.

Yes, we're about to make big decisions, even life-changing decisions. Whether it be a career, a family, travel, another go at university whether you have no idea or you've planned each step; whatever it is you've chosen, know that your decision does not define you. That feeling inside when you close your eyes and forget the past and forget the future and breathe, that is you. So while we will all make choices regarding the future, we are not defined by those choices, if we also chose to live in and appreciate the present moment.

By doing this we dissipate the fear; the joy and gratitude multiply. And who knows you may even live longer, or at least be better prepared to enjoy the beauty of this transition in our lives.

In the common room of Multi-faith Chaplaincy there is a poster that has had a profound impact on me. On it is a maxim heralded by all the world's religions regardless of the religion's origins, number of followers or age. Often called the "Golden Rule" we have been taught to *do unto others as we would have done unto ourselves*. By choosing the moment, listening to others viewpoints and treating others as we ourselves would like to be treated I am certain that we will achieve greatness for ourselves.

Seema Shah
Major in Political Science
Minor in Diversity and the Contemporary World

we are here for you!

Multi-faith Chaplaincy is part of your Concordia Student Services. Here you will find people who:

- think that asking questions about faith is a good thing
- are open-minded
- can offer support and understanding
- can ask the hard questions when necessary
- want to meet people of all backgrounds and learn from one another
- value inclusion
- explore ethical questions
- welcome you to help build a sense of community

Concordia Multi-faith Chaplaincy

XIV

The ocean and its waves
swell: is there a difference between the ocean and its waves?
A wave pushes shoreward, ascends to descend: it is water; a wave begins
and ends, again it is the same water. Where is the distinction?
Because it is named wave that it is water
drowns?

Inside Nature, every world is a story being narrated like a bead:
A thumb pulse on a rosary bead penetrates wisdom.

Leanne Tonkin
MA in English Literature & Creative Writing

Peer Support Program

Students Helping Students

A drop-in centre for listening, referral and information
run by (trained) students for students.

Free and confidential for Concordia Students!
Monday –Thursday
11 am – 5 PM

SGW, Annex Z (2090 Mackay),

Room 03.

Watch for our Loyola table and Hall Building display table as well as announcements about the upcoming clothes swap!

Info: (514) 848-2424 x 2859

Mother Hubbard's Cupboard

A Vegan Meal for just $2
Served with great community and conversation!
Every Thursday from 5 PM – 7 PM
Annex Z (2090 Mackay)
Starting September 20, 2007.
For more information or to help out, contact:
mohubbs@alcor.concordia.ca
or Daryl Ross
See you at Mo Hubbs!

Zen Meditation

Every Thursday Annex Z, Room 05
Instruction at 11:45 am
Sitting from 12:00-1:00 PM

Starting **September 20th,**
Contact Myōkyō for more information.

The Art of Living Club

"To live life fully and freely is an art, requiring skill, intuition, creativity, and knowledge."

Come and talk to us or get involved in our service project. Contact:
artoflivingconcordia@gmail.com
www.artofliving.org

Hillel

Hillel House, Jewish Student Centre is located at 3460 Stanley. Contact us for info about our Fall programs.
www.hillel.ca
514-845-9171

Sikh Student Association

Contact Manjit Singh if you are interested in attending meetings with this group.

Chabad House

We are pleased to host Chabad Bistro – a vegetarian restaurant with student prices – open Monday-Friday 11am-4pm. Come join us for Shabbat and Holiday prayers and meals, Hebrew lessons, Kabbalah, Talmud and more. Chabad House is located at 3429 Peel St.
www.chabadhouse.org
Contact Rabbi Mahn for more details.

SGI Buddhist Club

The SGI Buddhist Student Club is aimed at providing a peace, culture, and education movement based on the philosophy of Nichiren Buddhism. Their activities include a series of round table discussions, human rights exhibitions, film screenings, and interfaith dialogues.
Call Chaplaincy for the times of chanting sessions at Annex Z (2090 mackay)

Our Universe, Our Home:

Awakening to Inter-being.

A workshop series exploring environmental issues and spirituality. Led by Daryl Lynn Ross and Catherine Moore, Prof. Environmental Studies. Tuesdays, 11:45-1:00 September 25th to November 20th. Optimally participants will attend the entire workshop series, but registration will remain open throughout the eight weeks.

Contact Daryl Ross
for information.

Day-long Meditation Retreats

Sundays: August 26, September 30, November 25, December 23
Annex Z,(2090 Mackay), 9:15-2:00
Meditation instructions and practices, teachings on wisdom and compassion.
For information contact Daryl Ross

Building Bridges

Prison Visit Program

A Thursday evening discussion group once every 3 weeks with inmates of Leclerc Institute
Orientation required!
Next orientation:
September 20th,
6:30 PM. Annex Z, Rm 05
Info: Bernie Glover

Ever watch a good film that you wanted to talk about forever? Then our

Video Divina

Video & Discussion Group
is for you!
At SGW in *Annex Z*, (2090 Mackay) every 3rd Thursday, following Mother Hubbard's... (around 7:00 PM)
and
At Loyola every 3rd Sunday in the *Loyola Chapel* at 1:30 PM.
Free Admission
Everyone is welcome!
Info: Paul Amegashie or Bernie Glover

Volunteer Experience

Learn about yourself by reaching out to others!
Contact Ellie Hummel to find out about various volunteer opportunities on and off campus!

our in-house team

Ellie Hummel (Rev.)
Ecumenical Chaplain
Chaplaincy Coordinator
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Phone ext: 3590
Ellie.Hummel@concordia.ca

Daryl Lynn Ross
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Phone ext: 3585
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Roman Catholic Chaplain
Loyola Office: L-AD 130-2
Phone ext: 3587 (Tue, Wed, Th)
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Bernard Glover
Departmental Assistant
Loyola Office: AD 130
Phone ext: 3588
Hours: Mon-Fri – 9 AM to 5 PM
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Tracey Fisher
Secretary/Receptionist
SGW Office: Z 103
Phone ext: 3593
Hours: Mon-Fri – 9 AM to 5 PM
Tracey.Fisher@concordia.ca

spiritual and religious student groups

Art of Living (non-denominational spiritual group)
Spiritual Awareness Fellowship (non-denominational spiritual group)
Chabad (Jewish)
Hillel (Jewish)
Student Christian Movement
Concordia Christian Fellowship
Concordia University Pagan Society
The Vedic Culture Society of Concordia
Muslim Student Association
Student Association for Muslim Awareness
The SGI (Soka Gakkai International) Buddhist Student Club

If you would like to get in touch with any of these student groups, contact Multi-faith Chaplaincy.

our associate chaplains...

Muslim
Imam Salam Elmenyawi
514-748-8427
salam@succedent.net

Hindu
Dr. T.S. Rukmani (on leave)
rukmani@alcor.concordia.ca

Sikh
Mr. Manjit Singh
lo.man@sympatico.ca

Unitarian
Rev. Diane Rollert
514-485-7654
DianeRollert@ucmtl.ca

Jewish
Rabbi Shlomo Mahn (Chabad)
514-845-3812
montreal@chabadhouse.org

Dov Whitman (Hillel)
514-845-9171
dov@hillel.ca

Zen Buddhist
Myōkyō Judith McLean
514-842-3648
czenmain@dsuper.net

would you like to come visit?

You will always find a warm welcome at Chaplaincy!

sgw: annex z
2090 mackay
loyola: administration building
l-ad 130

if you would like to call ahead...
... dial 514- 848-2424 and enter the desired extension at the prompt.